



*the force  
for good*

2022 Annual Report



**Miller-Dwan** Foundation



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**Creating a healthy, vibrant,  
resilient community free  
from mental health crisis.**

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THE MILLER-DWAN FOUNDATION  
IS PROUD TO SUPPORT THE  
FOLLOWING AREAS:

**Amberwing - Center for  
Youth & Family Well-Being \***

**Animal-Assisted Therapy**

**Burn Care**

**Cancer Care**

**Innovations/Greatest Need**

**Mental Health**

**Physical Rehabilitation/Polinsky**

**Solvay Hospice House \***

\* The Miller-Dwan Foundation owns  
these facilities and is responsible for  
ongoing fundraising and charitable support.

THIS IS A TIME OF **opportunity**

A TIME TO ACT | TO BE STEWARDS OF OUR REGION'S WELL-BEING |  
TO RELENTLESSLY PURSUE SOLUTIONS TO THE MOST CHALLENGING  
HEALTH NEEDS FACING ITS PEOPLE | TO ADVOCATE, TO ORGANIZE,  
FACILITATE, MOBILIZE | TO WORK SIDE BY SIDE TO PROVIDE THE  
INNOVATIONS, THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES THOSE WHO NEED US  
MUST HAVE IN ORDER TO LIVE EMPOWERED AND DIGNIFIED LIVES

*Now is the time to be the force for hope, for healing—for good.*







# THE **force** FOR **healing**

**JULIA KOEPP** IS A SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD STUDENT, ARTIST AND MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATE. SHE WANTS TO GO INTO THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE FIELD WHEN SHE GRADUATES. FOR NOW, SHE'S USING HER VOICE—AND HER ART—TO SHARE MESSAGES OF SUPPORT AND HEALING.

"I'm doing some acrylic paintings for my art class," says Julia. "I'm working on a five-canvas collection. The focus is protesting our society's beauty standards."

She is also saving useful mental health tips, articles and notes in what she calls her "happy glitter folder." That one folder has grown into three over the years. Every day, Julia carries those folders to school and back. Each folder is packed with pieces for her to reference and share. Just recently she pulled out a sleep hygiene article to give to a cousin who was having difficulty sleeping.

When Julia was fourteen her world was far different than it is today. The pandemic had hit, everything was in lockdown, and Julia was facing incredibly difficult issues. Anxiety had her harming herself and falling into a substance use disorder.

Julia's mom, Jacque Koepp explains, "Julia was having daily anxiety which was causing a lot of stress in her life. Our family had gone through a lot of life changes in a short amount of time—coupled with world changes, societal changes and the pandemic."

"Daily anxiety and depression are an evil battle," says Jacque. "She was struggling with things I didn't understand, like anxiety at the level of panic disorder. Her substance use and self-harm behaviors were shocking. As a parent I felt very helpless. I didn't know how to deal with it."


School counselors and a therapist recommended Amberwing – Center for Youth & Family Well-Being.

"I was really hesitant to go to Amberwing at first," says Julia. "When I got there the kids welcomed me and surrounded me and made





"I see so many kids struggle with mental health problems. They don't know how to start helping themselves. Amberwing gives kids the willingness to want to help themselves."



Watch Julia's story at [mdfoundation.org](https://mdfoundation.org)



me feel good about being there. I felt super secure and safe when I was there, thanks to my doctor, two great counselors and my art therapist.”

“When Julia went to Amberwing it was an immediate relief for her and for me,” says Jacque. “She was given a skill set right away—a mental health tool box. And I was given reading material which I read ferociously throughout the first two nights she was there. I wanted to be ready. I wanted to be her sidekick.”

Julia experienced Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) at Amberwing. Dialectical means combining opposite ideas. DBT is a type of talk therapy that does that. It focuses on helping people accept the reality of their lives and their behaviors, as well as helping them learn to change their lives, including their unhelpful behaviors.

Some of the DBT tools Julia learned and now uses in her daily life include making a pros and cons list when she is considering harmful behaviors. She also keeps a diary card, a kind of mood, behavior and skills tracker that allows her to notice patterns and keep her DBT skills top of mind. Each day she checks her “PLEASE skills.” PLEASE is an acronym for:

- PL - treat Physical Illness
- E - balance your Eating
- A - Avoid mind-altering substances
- S - get enough Sleep
- E - get regular Exercise

Although Julia’s anxiety is pretty much in check these days, she is still dealing with it, as well as with depression. It’s why she is taking care of herself by continuing her mental health journey with Amberwing. As of this writing, Julia was attending a four-week refresher course to keep her skills up.

Both Julia and Jacque believe that Amberwing has given them the strength to be the force for healing in their own lives and to advocate for others.

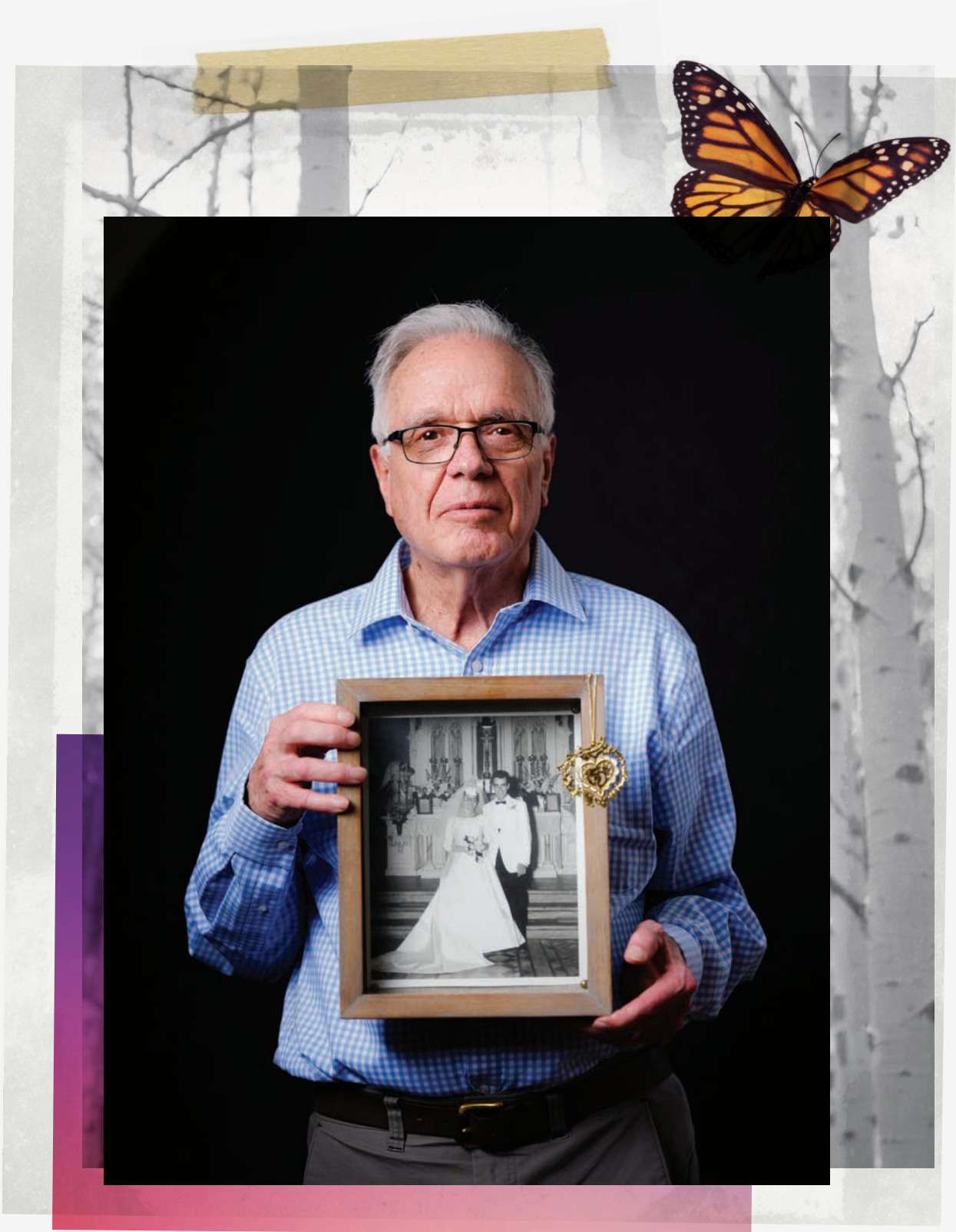
#### **AMBERWING - CENTER FOR YOUTH & FAMILY WELL-BEING**

**Amberwing was created and is owned by the Miller-Dwan Foundation. It brings together the combined resources of community philanthropy and the very best compassionate, skilled care to shape a national model of effective mental health care. It prioritizes innovative models of care that seek to understand the root causes of mental health issues and provide services that intentionally build resilience and healing.**

“I feel like in our society it is very difficult for any of us to admit we need emotional and mental health support,” says Jacque. “We all try to get through our lives on our own—pedaling as hard as possible to get through it. We need to take time to admit we need more than what is inside ourselves. We need people, community, connection. We need to reset in order to continue on with our goals. Too often we set aside the things we need most. Amberwing allows us a place to start over, to build strength, resilience—hope.”

As far as Julia is concerned, she wishes there were an Amberwing on every corner. “I see so many kids struggle with mental health problems,” says Julia. “They don’t know how to start helping themselves. Amberwing gives kids the willingness to want to help themselves.”







# THE **force** FOR **hope**

WHEN THE HEALTH **OF SOMEONE YOU LOVE** IS  
DIMINISHING, IT'S SO HARD TO KNOW WHAT TO DO.  
THERE'S THE FEAR THAT YOU AREN'T DOING ENOUGH,  
THAT YOU COULD SOMEHOW GIVE THEM MORE TIME.

Those were the feelings of Jim Larson and his four boys (Matt, Pete, Dave and John) when they decided—along with their beloved wife and mom, Alice—that it was time to move her to Solvay Hospice House. Alice was cared for by Jim at home until the trips to the hospital got to be more frequent and the care she needed got to be more intense.

When Alice entered Solvay, her heart was failing, along with her kidneys and her liver, but not her spirit.

She and Jim had 58 years together, raising the boys, spending time at the cabin, traveling to Mexico, Canada and through back roads in areas of the United States that not many people have seen. They rock hounded in Utah, saw the redwoods, went to the butterfly migration in Mexico and fly fished in Canada.

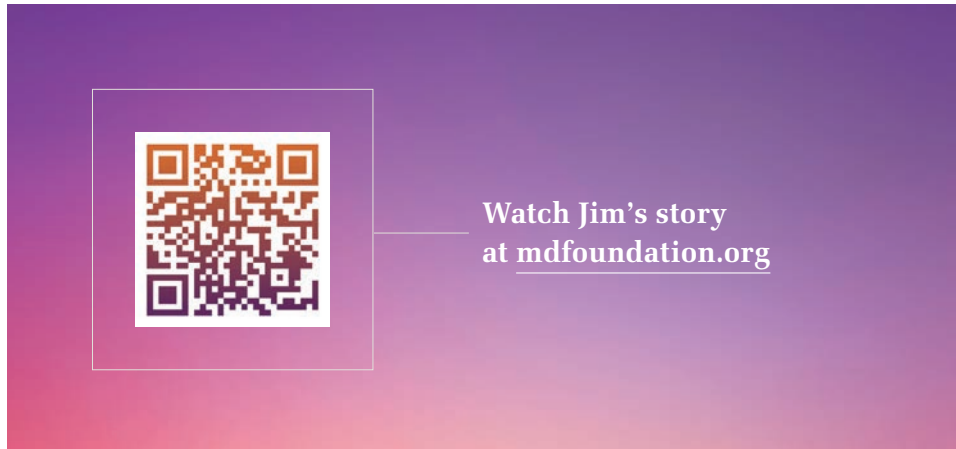
“Alice never had a mean bone in her body,” says Jim. “She thought everyone was great. She loved golfing. All I had to do was mention the word ‘golf’ and she was already in the car. She loved racquetball, hiking, being outdoors—and she really loved her grandchildren.”

“We did good. We were a team,” says Jim. And so it was that as a team, Alice and Jim (and the boys too) decided it was time to go to Solvay.

“We talked about what we were going to do. I looked at some places,” says Jim. “One of the hospitalists and a social worker at Essentia were helping us out and they mentioned Solvay. I knew people who had been there. When they mentioned Solvay we said yes right away. We could see it was time. It was the right thing to do. Someone was watching over us to get us to go there.”



"It was a tough journey all the way through Alice's illness, but when we got to Solvay, it calmed everything down. We weren't looking for the end, just the calmness of moving on."



Watch Jim's story at [mdfoundation.org](https://mdfoundation.org)





Jim says the whole experience was that of peace. One of his favorite things to do when Alice dozed off was to go to the meditation room at Solvay and look out the window at the trees. Alice also enjoyed the views from the window in her room.

“It was a tough journey all the way through Alice’s illness, but when we got to Solvay, it calmed everything down,” says Jim. “We weren’t looking for the end, just the calmness of moving on. We thought we might have three months. We ended up having two weeks.”

**SOLVAY HOSPICE HOUSE** was created for the community by Miller-Dwan Foundation, which owns and is responsible for the hospice’s continued stewardship. It is nestled on 9.5-acres of pristine woodlands and bathed in the light of floor-to-ceiling windows that follow the rhythm of the sun. It allows those in the last weeks or days of their lives to be fully comfortable, to have pain removed and human bonds strengthened. To simply be, and find peace.

Alice and Jim’s son, John Larson, posted the following message on Facebook that Jim says sums up their experience at Solvay—and how the hospice house is such a force for hope for families.

*“My family celebrated my mom last weekend at Solvay Hospice House. The care team at Solvay is the BEST! They kept my mom comfortable so she was able to focus on spending time with her friends and family. My dad was able to spend nights there and reminisce with my mother about all the places they traveled and all the memories they made together. We saw my dad go from caregiver back to a doting husband. We wanted to make sure others were able to come to Solvay in their most vulnerable time, so we as a family donated to Solvay Hospice House in memory of Alice Larson. We want to thank everyone who donated in memory of our mother and let them know that we are grateful.”*

Alice’s memory will live on in Jim, in her children and in her grandchildren. A favorite that comes to mind for Jim is how she would buy shoes (or send money to buy shoes) for each of her seven grandchildren at the beginning of each school year. To Jim, that tradition was such a genuine expression of her love for each of them.







*Awaken your spirit to adventure  
Hold nothing back learn to find ease in risk  
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm  
for your soul senses the world that awaits you*

# THE **force** FOR **good**

INFORMATION OVERLOAD, STRESS, ANXIETY, INSOMNIA, FEAR, SADNESS, LONELINESS, INCREASED SUBSTANCE USE, FINANCIAL INSTABILITY, ILLNESS, GRIEF. THE PANDEMIC HAS AFFECTED THE **MENTAL HEALTH** OF EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US—AND TO THIS DAY, IT CONTINUES TO AFFECT OUR LIVES AND THE LIVES OF THOSE WE LOVE.

Statistics on mental health in the 2022 Biden-Harris Report on Mental Health reveal that two in five American adults report symptoms of anxiety and depression. More than half of parents express concern over their children’s mental well-being. Over 40 percent of teenagers state that they struggle with persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

A recent study published in part by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 90 percent of U.S. adults believe that our country is facing a mental health crisis. Nearly 50 percent of those who believe there is a crisis also noted there was a severe mental health crisis in their own families. Compounding this crisis is a shortage of mental health care workers, as well as options for care.

Miller-Dwan Foundation and its board of directors are responding by meeting the mental health crisis head-on. The aim is to make a real

and demonstrated impact that will create a healthy, resilient region free from mental health crisis.

To ensure that it is able to develop the initiatives that will make this bold vision a reality, Miller-Dwan Foundation has added psychologist Rick Gertsema, MS, LP to its staff as its mental health senior advisor. Gertsema brings 40+ years of experience—working in every possible mental health setting in the field—to this new position.

“My passion—what has sustained me throughout my career—is the privilege of providing care for people who are likely in their most vulnerable state of being,” says Gertsema. “Meeting people, being present, understanding the pain, the stress and strife. It is humbling.” The past 25 years of Gertsema’s career have been in mental health related roles at Essentia

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for good*



Watch Rick's story  
at [mdfoundation.org](http://mdfoundation.org)





Health. Ten of those years have been in leadership positions, including three years as Manager of Outpatient Behavioral Health for Essentia Health's East Region. He is also the author of a book titled *Peaceful and Practical Parenting*.

"There was a mental health crisis before the pandemic—we were already there," says Gertsema. "Because of the pandemic, however, rates of depression and anxiety skyrocketed 20 to 30 percent. We are all living in sustained trauma, dealing with lingering day-to-day uncertainty. It has affected kids, young parents with kids at home and underserved populations the most."

Gertsema's goal, and the goal of Miller-Dwan Foundation, is to look at creative ways to address the current crisis—ways not thought of before.

"We can transform the way mental health care is delivered," says Gertsema. "We can address access to care and the current shortage of healthcare workers. We can expose long-standing cracks in our care infrastructure and provide the right level of care at the right time to meet the needs of our region."

Since he started with Miller-Dwan Foundation in November of 2022, Gertsema has been exchanging creative ideas and solution-building with connections from all over the world. He's connected with the World Health Organization, the Pan American Health Organization, and institutes out East. He's also studied the Biden-Harris Report on Mental Health. Those connections and that research have led to the formation of relationships with mental health experts, activists and providers from around the globe, one of whom recently stated: "Miller-Dwan Foundation, welcome to the global mental health community."

What has emerged from the vision of Miller-Dwan Foundation and its board of directors, with the help of Gertsema in his role, is HopeX. This revolutionary response to eliminating the mental health crisis in our region is a multi-phased approach that will see Miller-Dwan Foundation implementing a holistic and comprehensive effort that involves:

- Collaborating with international partners in the use of an evidence-based innovative model for the expansion and mobilization of a boots-on-the-ground mental health workforce.
- Improving access to proven therapies.
- Introducing new services.
- Addressing the dire need for mental health support in underserved portions of our region through the expansion of facilities.

The mental health crisis requires ongoing attention and the support of advocates and leaders. Miller-Dwan Foundation intends to be that leader and to gather advocates ready to put meaningful solutions to work.

"Incredible things are happening internationally and in the U.S.," says Gertsema. "My role as mental health advisor and my experience as a former clinician allows me to get people connected who need to be connected. Together, we can generate creative ways to transform mental health care in our region, our state, and beyond."

"There is hope. We are moving forward with the gift of Rick Gertsema by our side," says Traci Marciniak, Miller-Dwan Foundation President. "He is a true force for good and with his help we will create a healthy, resilient region free from mental health crisis. Join us."

**HOPE** **X**  
multiply  
community  
healing

## 2022 Miller-Dwan Foundation Van Gorden Funds

*Issued twice per year, Miller-Dwan Foundation Van Gorden Funds directly support physical rehabilitation-related program and equipment needs.*

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**\$14,000 The Minnesota Masonic Children's Clinic** for the integration of occupational therapy in programming for children with communication disorders.

**\$30,000 Lighthouse Center for Vital Living** to support comprehensive rehabilitation services.

**\$20,511 Miller-Dwan Rehabilitation Services** for updated iPads throughout.

**\$4,851 Miller-Dwan Behavioral Health Staff** to provide autism certification training.

**\$437 Miller-Dwan Medical Rehabilitation Center** to purchase an upper extremity positioning device.

**\$9,100 The University of Minnesota, Duluth** to help college students learn to provide physical education to children with disabilities.

**\$2,750 Miller-Dwan Rehabilitation Staff** to provide advanced therapeutic neuroscience education.

**\$7,400 Miller-Dwan Rehabilitation Center** to purchase a specialized monitor designed for fiberoptic/endoscopic evaluation of swallowing.

**\$2,750 Miller-Dwan Rehabilitation Staff** for *Vision Rehabilitation after Neurological Events* training.

**\$40,500 The College of St. Scholastica** for a longitudinal study to determine the effectiveness of the Mobility Checkup for older adults.

**\$9,077 Miller-Dwan Inpatient Rehabilitation** to address the needs of patients who have dizziness and balance problems.

**\$21,620 Polinsky Medical Rehabilitation Center** to support SPEAK OUT!, a Parkinson's therapy group.

**\$15,985 Virginia's Essentia Health Rehabilitation Center** for pediatric rehabilitation equipment.

**\$18,249 Esko and Northwestern Fitness Centers** to upgrade fitness center equipment.

**\$4,275 Miller-Dwan Rehabilitation Staff** for education in swallowing assessment, treatment and care.

**\$5,175 The Minnesota Ballet for ABLE** (Adaptive Ballet Lessons for Everybody).

## 2022 Miller-Dwan Foundation Innovations Fund

*Miller-Dwan Foundation Innovations Funds are directed to the historic specialty areas of the former Miller-Dwan Medical Center.*

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**\$20,000 Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault (PAVSA)** for psychotherapy services.

**\$51,358 Stage 3 of the Duluth Resilience Study** designed to validate a new survey that will determine individual resilience.

**\$2,500 Council on Foundations** for staff education.



Watch all of the stories from the annual report [here](#).

## 2022 Miller-Dwan Foundation Designated Funds

<b>Amberwing – Center for Youth &amp; Family Well-Being</b> To support mental health programming for ages birth to 26 and their families, community wide coping education and subsidized rent.....	<b>\$721,818</b>
<b>Douglas County Mental Health Project</b> To facilitate the planning and implementation of mental health solutions in Douglas County.....	<b>\$24,574</b>
<b>Solvay Hospice House</b> For compassionate and dignified end-of-life care, home maintenance and subsidized rent .....	<b>\$406,494</b>
<b>Physical Rehabilitation Services</b> For patient care and equipment.....	<b>\$207,275</b>
<b>Burn/Trauma</b> For clinician education.....	<b>\$5,200</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Support</b> For areas including cancer care, cancer survivorship and animal-assisted therapy.....	<b>\$1,775</b>

## 2022 Financial Summary

### ASSETS







2021 (Market Value).....	\$36,698,264
2022 (Market Value).....	\$31,065,709

### CONTRIBUTIONS

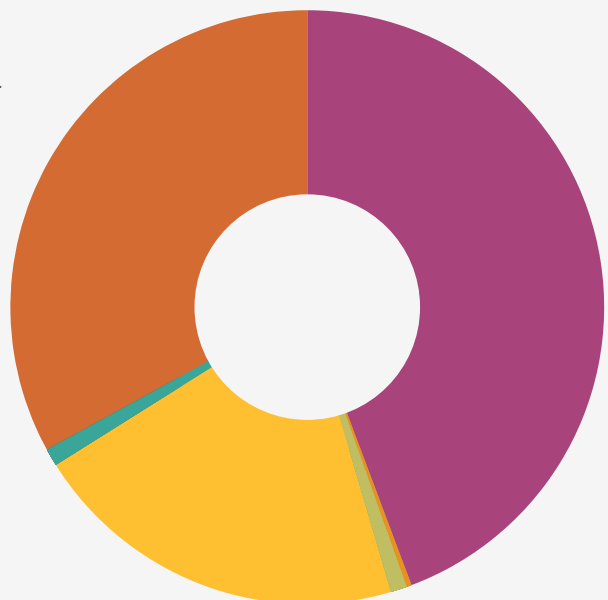
2021.....	\$704,154
2022.....	\$994,537

# impact

TOGETHER, WE ARE SUPPORTING IMMEDIATE HEALTH NEEDS AND VISIONARY IMPROVEMENTS—SO THAT OUR REGION CAN THRIVE, NOW AND FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

	Amberwing/Mental Health Services
	Burn/Trauma
	Cancer Services
	Solvay
	Physical Rehabilitation Services
	Misc.

**TOTAL: \$1,896,365**





SAVE THE DATE



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

## ARTcetera 2022

ARTcetera 2022 was an astounding evening. We couldn't have been happier to be back in person—together we raised over \$100,000 for mental health care in our region.

Thank you to everyone who attended, those who underwrote or contributed to our incredible live and silent auctions, and those who worked behind the scenes.

It is the strength of your advocacy, your kindness and your generosity that allows us to continually give voice to the mental health crisis in our region. You make it possible for us to move forward, make the connections and take the action needed to spur real change.

It is our honor to do this life-changing work with you. Let's do it again this year as we celebrate 25 years of making an impact—together.

# LETTER FROM OUR **president**

## You are the force behind all that we do

It is a great honor to write this letter to all the people and local businesses that make Miller-Dwan Foundation such an incredible **force for good** in our region. Through your encouragement and powerful support of our efforts, and your generosity of time and financial resources, Miller-Dwan Foundation has been able to touch countless lives this past year. From the care at Solvay Hospice House to Polinsky Medical Rehabilitation Center to burn treatment and more, you've had a hand in the comfort and healing of so many people. For that, thank you.

The health care needs of our family, friends and neighbors continue to grow—particularly mental health care. The number of children and adults needing mental health care since the beginning of the pandemic has more than doubled, creating a crisis of care never previously seen. You, as donors and supporters of Miller-Dwan Foundation, have recognized this crisis and have

shown your steadfast commitment to partnering with us to make a difference. Because of your gifts, we continue to grow and support mental health services at Amberwing – Center for Youth & Family Well-Being and beyond, and are poised to take action to have an even greater impact in the future.

The **force for good** is here and you're a vital part of it.

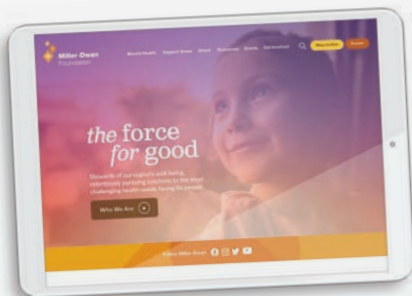


Traci Marciniak  
PRESIDENT



Mike Seyfer  
2023 BOARD PRESIDENT

## All new [mdfoundation.org](https://mdfoundation.org)



We're proud to announce the launch of our completely redesigned website. This new site remains a place to donate in the way that's right for you, as well as to stay in touch with the Miller-Dwan Foundation community online. In the coming months and years, this site will grow to be a mental health resource for our region and a place for you to be part of creating a healthy, vibrant, resilient community free from mental health crisis.

We also invite you to contact us or visit anytime to talk about an intended gift, ask questions or get additional information.

218.786.5829 • [mdfoundation.org](https://mdfoundation.org)



# Miller-Dwan Foundation

502 E. 2nd Street  
Duluth, MN 55805  
218.786.5829  
mdfoundation.org

## support FOR A HEALTHIER REGION

Miller-Dwan Foundation improves the health of the people of our region through the creation of impactful community solutions that overcome barriers. We support the future and the legacy of Miller-Dwan Medical Center, Polinsky Medical Rehabilitation Center, Solvay Hospice House, Amberwing – Center for Youth & Family Well-Being and other initiatives for our region's health. By coming together with others who share our vision and passion, we are able to make a difference in the lives of people every day.

If you wish to have your name removed from the list to receive future Miller-Dwan Foundation materials, please call or write to us at our address.



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